

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 13138 271123Z

44

ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 OMB-01 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 BOOK-000 (ISO) W

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R 271008Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9553

INFO USUN NEW YORK 813

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 13138

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US

SUBJECT: REACTION TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: (A) MANILA 13000; (B) STATE 211862

1. AS INDICATED REFTEL A, THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE MEDIA REPORTING ON MURDER OF TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS IN PANMUNJOM BUT ONLY LIGHT COMMENTARY. NO HIGH RANKING GOP OFFICIALS HAVE COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON MURDERS OR ON POSSIBILITY OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN U.S. AND NORTH KOREA. EDITORIALIST HAVE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE ANXIETY AT POSSIBILITY INCIDENT COULD LEAD TO WAR AND HAVE URGED RESTRAINT ON BOTH SIDES. ONLY HABITUALLY ANTI-AMERICAN "EVENING POST" CLAIMED U.S. MIGHT BE QUILTY OF OVER REACTION, MAINTAINING STORIES RELEASED BY BOT SIDES "AT BEST MURKY" AND THAT UN TROOPS MIGHT HAVE PROVOKED NORTH KOREAN ASSAULT.

2. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE IN GUIDED PRESS GOP CREDITS NORTH KOREAN VERSION OF INCIDENT. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL REACTION TO INCIDENT, IF THERE HAD BEEN, WE SUSPECT IT WOULD BE ROOTED IN GENUINE CONCERN AT BARBARIC NORTH KOREAN CONDUCT. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS OUR BEST JUDGMENT THAT MURDER OF U.S. OFFICERS, NO MATTER HOW DEPLORABLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MANILA 13138 271123Z

WILL NOT RPT NOT APPRECIABLY AFFECT GOP'S POSITION ON KOREAN ISSUE

AT UNGA AND WE SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION LEST WE APPEAR
TO BE EXPLOITING TRAGEDY FOR THIS PURPOSE.

3. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS
OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (MANY OF WHOM
SERVED IN KOREAN CONFLICT) HAVE INDICATED TO DEFENSE
ATTACHE THEIR DISTRESS AT MURDER OF U.S. OFFICERS AS
WELL AS THEIR APPREHENSION NORTH KOREAN/U.S. CONFRON-
TATION COULD LEAD TO WAR. SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS OF
REGRET AND CONCERN ALSO VOICED BY FOREIGN MILITARY
ATTACHES.
SULLIVAN

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